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it seems obvious that Serbia's interests should overrule those of Bulgaria and that they should be given weight even against the interests and aspirations of Italy. It is not quite clear, however, that national aspirations are the only questions involved in the Balkan situation; nor may it be taken for granted that America is committed by its own policy and theory of government to the view that every problem of this sort is to be solved through the furtherance of traditional national aims and through observance of the principle of racial unity. Federation, not national aggrandizement, is the American idea: this is not quite the same as Panslavism—perhaps not quite the same as the Serbian conception of an ideal settlement of the Balkan situation. In the friendliest spirit surely the United States will endeavor to see that full justice is done to Serbia and that full reparation is made to her for all that she has suffered. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that Americans are inclined to accept whatever extreme construction any people may be inclined to put upon its "national destiny."

M. Savic has written a forceful plea, which is also an illuminating interpretation. His book, however, should be regarded not as affording a solution of the Balkan problem, but only as a just and eloquent presentation of one aspect of that problem.

LORD ACTON'S CORRESPONDENCE. Edited by J. N. Figgis and R. V. Lawrence. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1917.

It is as a historian that Lord Acton is chiefly remembered; for although his historical writings are not actually very numerous, although his projected *magnum opus*—the *History of Liberty*—was in fact never completed, his immense learning and his profound judgment made a deep impression upon the minds of historical scholars all over the world. His influence, direct and indirect, has been very great.

And yet it is doubtless true that as a historian Acton has come to seem a little bit old-fashioned. Certainly he was not what we now mean by a "scientific" historian. His history was to him not merely a method of inquiry, but a system of thought. His mind was filled with it, and in a degree unusual with modern scholars he carried it about with him. What he knew, or aspired to know, was not historic problems, or the method of historic research, but history. Furthermore, he differed from the typical scientific historian of to-day in that his conception of history was profoundly and unashamedly ethical. His historical views were as deeply wrought into the structure of his mind as were his religious beliefs or his political judgments. Indeed, all three sets of opinions were at root nearly identical: certainly there was no inconsistency among them.

As a religious thinker, Acton seems, at first thought, less important than he does as a historian. How could a Catholic who strenuously maintained those doctrines concerning the freedom of belief and the supremacy of conscience which are popularly supposed to be the exclusive property of Protestants write about religion in a way that would be effectual with other Catholics? And again, how could one to whom the Roman Catholic communion was "dearer than life,"—one who

accepted certain beliefs on faith, and who seems to have cared comparatively little about reconciling science with religion,—how could such a one write about religious matters in a way that would affect opinion outside his own Church?

His position was, indeed, anomalous; yet he cannot be accused of inconsistency. In his opposition to the Vatican Decrees he was actuated by principles, not by considerations of expediency. He was beaten, yet he did not feel obliged to separate himself from the Church. He saw that the dogma of Papal Infallibility in its final form was very much qualified; he perceived that Newman's minimizing view of the doctrine "made it possible technically to accept the whole of the Decrees." Moreover, he was a layman: he held no teaching office. But these, after all, were not the considerations that weighed most with him. In time he came to realize that he had always been opposed to the policy of which the decrees were but the latest expression. He was a Catholic at heart; he "belonged," as he once said, "to the soul of the Church"; but with the official government of the Church throughout its history, he could have had, except for brief periods, little sympathy. He could not withdraw from communion with the Church without detaching himself from its soul; he could remain in that communion without approving or professing to approve what he regarded as a false and harmful policy.

The truth is that Acton's criticisms of the Church are of a piece with his criticisms of history and with his criticisms of literature and of politics. In all these fields of thought he is equally consistent and courageous; in all equally his point of view is profoundly ethical. A few great principles controlled his judgment—the principle, especially, of freedom, and next to that, perhaps, the principle of the sanctity of human life. Minor principles did not weigh with him as they do with less comprehensive thinkers. Democracy was not to him the *ultima ratio*. Of centralized democracy he disapproved almost as heartily as he did of absolutism. It was for this reason that his sympathies during the American Civil War lay with the South. Nationalism or racial autonomy he did not make a fetish. Though he approved of Gladstone and of Home Rule, his adhesion to Liberalism depended not on the narrow doctrine of nationalism but upon the broad conception of freedom. Autocracy, of course, he utterly condemned, and so well did he understand the fundamental difference between absolutism and freedom, and the practical workings of the former, that he was one of the first to foresee the real danger of Prussianism.

In short, Acton had made a synthesis of his historical, his religious, his personal views upon a very broad ethical basis. In his judgments he can never be accused of narrowness or undue severity. In history, he maintained, personal vices and personal virtues are commonly of little account: sincerity and concern for the sanctity of human life are almost the sole moral tests of a statesman. He was thus very far from being a petty moralist. Yet he consistently maintained the ethical standard.

In his general correspondence the same strength is apparent—the strength, namely, of unity and consistency—that appears in his formal writings. Great power usually results from a broad synthesis. In Acton's case power is supplemented by detailed knowledge. Acton

was a thorough student of history, a man acquainted with affairs, a man of the world, a man of letters capable of acute literary criticism.

It is as such a man that the first volume of his letters reveal him. Seldom in epistolary literature is so much strength joined with so much sanity and so much charm as in the case of Acton's correspondence. His ideas, always deeply based, often original, not seldom challenging, are the expression of a personality that has acquired an exceptional degree of unity. The ideas themselves, in many cases, seem particularly adapted to a time in which men are being compelled by the terrible logic of war to take stock of their ethical conceptions and to view the whole of life's problems in a realistic and at the same time an earnestly moral or religious light.

CAMPAIGNS AND INTERVALS. By Jean Giraudoux. Translated by Elizabeth S. Sergeant. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918.

Looking at the war in certain large and, in a sense, conventional ways we can all after a fashion understand it. As a moral phenomenon, as a military event, as a huge catastrophe, it may be more or less clearly grasped with the aid of principles, maps, or statistics. But besides wanting to understand the war in the abstract, people passionately desire to appreciate it as experience.

Now the question that every one wants to have answered with respect to any experience in the least out of the ordinary—the question, “Just how did it seem?”—is the hardest of all questions to answer satisfactorily. Most men simply cannot answer it at all. Their replies consist of irrelevant details or conventional ideas. If any one even for a moment succeeds in describing an experience unconventionally, fully, and truly, the appreciative hearer rejoices.

Obviously the experiences of war, as they present themselves to an impressible and reasonable mind, must seem shockingly incoherent. War breaks up old coherences, creates new associations. Events never before thought of in the same category occur together or in sequence. Thoughts or emotions that never in time of peace had even a bowing acquaintance with each other are joined in a close embrace. War experiences must be therefore the hardest experiences of all for the conscious impressionist—the soldier who is also a skilled writer—to describe adequately to those unconscious impressionists, his questioners. They are a dull, gaping lot, these questioners, for we are all dull when it comes to understanding one another: it requires something like genius to make one's inner sense of a thing plain to the most intelligent and friendly soul. But the questioners are really in earnest. They are worth enlightening; and in order that they may be enlightened they must be made to feel not only the strangeness, the incongruity of things as they appear to the soldier, but their oneness as experience, their seeming coherence, their dreamlike plausibility.

Perhaps no more sincere, more exact, more unconventional or more various record of war impressions was ever written than that which Jean Giraudoux has given us in his book *Campaigns and Intervals*. The effect of many passages of this record is so simple and so